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Children's Plays

THE VISITORS

By

FLORENCE KIPER FRANK



CHICAGO
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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By MAURICE HAGEMAN

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

THE VISITORS

A PLAY TO BE ACTED BY CHILDREN
IN ONE ACT

By

FLORENCE KIPER FRANK

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CHICAGO

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PS 3511
R253V5
1916

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JOHN WILLOUGHBY.....A boy of ten
SUSAN WILLOUGHBY.....A girl of eight
MAMA WILLOUGHBY (the part to be taken by a girl of 14 or 15)
PAPA WILLOUGHBY (the part to be taken by a boy of about 15)
LITTLE GHOST BOY.....A child of ten
LITTLE GHOST GIRL.....A child of eight

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no. 1

THE VISITORS

SCENE—*Bedroom of the Willoughby children, JOHN and SUSAN. There are two little white-counterpaned beds at the right of the room. At the left is a dresser and other appointments of an attractive bedroom for well-to-do city-apartment children. The entrance to the room is a door at the back of the stage.*

In the center of the room and toward the front of the stage is a fair-sized table, the kind that might hold a sewing-basket, children's books, etc. At present it is occupied by the under half of a large cardboard box—a flimsy box of the department-store variety. Under this box is spread a table-cover of immaculate whiteness. Within the box, an experiment by the Willoughby children is in process. They have filled the flimsy affair with nice, soft, sticky mud—filled it so that the mud is level with the top of the cardboard sides. With this mud as a foundation they are laying out a miniature forest—small twigs for the lofty trees, a stone in the background for a distant mountain, a small cardboard structure for a cabin in the forest. When the curtain rises, the two children, JOHN in pajamas, SUSAN in a nightgown, are busily intent on the experiment.

JOHN. [*In a sort of a chant, as he plants the twigs, places the stone, etc.*]

And here we'll put a little tree,
And here a little fountain,
And guarding over all the land,
A great and lofty mountain.

It's beautiful now, isn't it, Susan—I mean MYTYL.

SUSAN. [*Rather dubiously.*] Y-yes! Yes, it is beautiful, John—I mean TYTYL.

JOHN. You aren't beginning to be a scardy-cat, are you, MYTYL?

SUSAN. Well, TYTYL, dear, are you altogether quite sure that mother is going to like it?

JOHN. [*Grandly.*] O, she won't mind when I explain to her all about it. [*Marks out various objects with his finger.*]

And here we'll put a little stream,
And here a tree with branches,
And by the open cottage door
A—a—a—

[*Hesitates in thought for a few moments and finally exclaims emphatically.*] I don't know *what* to put by the open cottage door. I can't think of anything that would rhyme with branches—at least I can't think of anything that would stand by an open cottage door. Can you, MYTYL?

SUSAN. [*Without stopping to think.*] No, I can't; and I'm sure there isn't anything or you would have thought of it. You do think of the most beautiful words and the most *beautiful* poems!

JOHN. [*Modestly.*] O, they aren't much, really! [*With growing enthusiasm.*] But do you know what I'm going to do sometime?—when I'm grown?

SUSAN. [*Clasping her hands.*] O what, TYTYL! Tell me!

JOHN. I'm going to be a really poet—a really true one—and live way off in the forest—and have a little cottage just like this one—and sit at the door of it, like Hiawatha—

“At the door on summer evenings”—

and every summer evening I'll look at the stars, O, a long, long time—just look and look at them shining and shining—and when they've shined right into me, the way they do sometimes, then I'll walk into the cottage and

I'll light the lamp and I'll sit down at the table and I'll write a poem—a *beautiful* poem about them—a new one every evening—

SUSAN. And I'll sit there while you're writing and I'll look at you, TYTYL.

JOHN. [*Awakened from his dream.*] You can if you want to. But you mustn't interrupt—not once—not one single word while I'm thinking—

SUSAN. [*Earnestly.*] Really, I won't. O I won't. I promise.

JOHN. All right, you can come, then. And it's going to look just the way this does—everything—the forest and the trees and the mountains. [*He surveys the miniature scene thoughtfully and exclaims.*] O don't you think we'd better have another little stream rushing down the side of the mountain?

SUSAN. [*Seizing a little cup that has been standing on a chair.*] Let me do it. Let me make it rush, TYTYL.

JOHN. All right, then. One cupful will do it.

[*She runs from the room and returns in a moment with a cupful of water, which she pours into the already saturated mud in the box. This last cupful is a little too much. The side of the box gives way and the mud oozes out on the white table-cover. This accident can be managed with a box constructed so that one side may be easily knocked out.*]

JOHN. There now! Now you have done it.

SUSAN. [*Beginning to sob.*] O TYTYL, I'm sorry. I am sorry. And mother will be angry. I know, I know she will be.

JOHN. There she comes now. I hear her.

[*As MOTHER WILLOUGHBY enters from door back, the two children stand so that the ruin on the table may be shielded. They change their positions as she advances.*]

MOTHER. JOHN! SUSAN! Bedtime! Sleepy-time, kiddies!

JOHN. [*Aside—indignantly.*] She talks to us as if we were babies!

SUSAN. S-s-sh! She's going to see it.

MOTHER. Come now, honey-bunny. Let mother comb her hair for her.

SUSAN. [*Not moving.*] I can do it myself now, mother.

MOTHER. Well, can she! Pretty soon I shan't have any baby any longer.

JOHN. Don't they want you in the dining room for dinner, mother?

MOTHER. Not just this minute, sonny. Company tonight. A really, truly party. All dressed up in our bestest. Daddy and I want to see you children safe asleep first.—Whatever makes you act so queerly?

JOHN. N-nothing, mother. We're just standing here by the table.

MOTHER. Yes, I see that, sonny. [*Pulls him gently away from the table, and when she sees the devastation, cries out.*] O! O! O! JOHN! JOHN! SUSAN!

SUSAN. It was my fault, mother. I—

JOHN. No, indeed, mother, it wasn't. I told her—

SUSAN. But I got the water.

JOHN. I asked you to do it.

MOTHER. I'm afraid that I shall have to punish both of my children.

JOHN. [*Eagerly.*] But, mother dear, it's the forest—and flowers—and a little cottage—

MOTHER. JOHN, you know very well that it's nothing but sticky mud and water out of the faucet.

JOHN. But, mother, some day I'm going to live there. I'm going to live there and be a poet—

MOTHER. [*Not hearing him—gazing sadly at the table.*] A new table, too—and a new table-cover. JOHN! SUSAN! You'll have to go to bed without your suppers!

FATHER WILLOUGHBY. [*Calls from outside.*] MOTHER! MOTHER! Won't you tie my bow-tie for me?

MOTHER. Right in here, daddy.

FATHER. [*As he enters, sees the crestfallen appearance of the children.*] What's this! What's this! What's the trouble with JOHN and SUSAN?

JOHN. MYTYL said that *she* did it, but really, truly—

SUSAN. It wasn't TYTYL, daddy. Honestly it wasn't.

FATHER. MYTYL! TYTYL! What are they talking of, MOTHER?

JOHN. We got them out of The Blue Bird. You see, we don't like our real names. They're too real—
JOHN and SUSAN—

FATHER. Don't like their real names! Did you ever hear of such nonsense?

MOTHER. They've been very naughty children,
DADDY. I shall have to send them to bed without their suppers.

FATHER. Do as you think best about it, MOTHER. Only don't, for goodness sake, be late for dinner.

MOTHER. Yes, DADDY. Don't kiss them good-night this evening.

[FATHER leaves the room without saying good-night to the children. MOTHER WILLOUGHBY bundles them into bed, turns down the light, and she also leaves without saying good-night to them.]

SUSAN. [*Her voice coming sobbingly from the bed-clothes.*] She—*she* didn't kiss us either.

JOHN. [*Determined to show no weakness—gruffly.*] He said our names were silly.

SUSAN. They don't love us any more, TYTYL. [*In a wail.*] My mother didn't kiss me!

JOHN. [*More gruffly.*] Huh! I don't care. Don't be a baby. [*Gets out of the bed, and sits on it.*] I'm going to run away from here. That's what I'm going to do, this minute.

SUSAN. [*Sitting up.*] Wh-where are you going to run to?

JOHN. To the forest. To my cottage.

SUSAN. [*Horror-struck.*] You're not going in your pajamas!

JOHN. Huh, I don't care. It's warm there. It's summer.

SUSAN. JOHN WILLOUGHBY, put on your suit this instant.

JOHN. Won't!

SUSAN. Then I shan't go with you.

JOHN. All right, then!

[*He pulls on an overcoat over his pajamas, and SUSAN puts her coat over her nightgown. Thus attired, the two children start hand in hand for the door and throw it open, only to be confronted by a strange apparition. On the threshold stand a boy and girl, also hand in hand. The boy is about JOHN'S age, the girl SUSAN'S. But they are not modern children. They are attired in the costumes worn at the time when MOTHER and FATHER WILLOUGHBY were boy and girl. These costumes may be of the children's styles of about 1870, or later. The pantalettes of the '70 period are suggested.*

JOHN and SUSAN fall back in amazement, as the two strange little children come shyly forward. These latter stand still in the middle of the room, and JOHN and SUSAN stare at them with curiosity.

SUSAN. [*Clasping her hands enthusiastically.*] O, aren't they cunning?

JOHN. Sh-sh, MYTYL! You might hurt their feelings.

SUSAN. Who are they, TYTYL?

JOHN. I don't know any more than you do. They look like a picture I saw once somewhere.

BOY. We're not a picture, and it's very rude of you to say so.

[*Both JOHN and SUSAN start in astonishment when the BOY begins to speak, but they quickly recover their composure and their manners.*]

SUSAN. [*Earnestly.*] O, he didn't mean to be rude—really! He didn't say you *were* a picture. He said just that you looked like a picture.

GIRL. They did make a picture of me once. It was a crayon picture—a great big one.

SUSAN. [*Trying to remember.*] Yes, and once I saw it.

BOY. They made a picture of me, too. I was ten years old. I stood with my hand on a table. [*He poses himself in the stiff photographic manner of the period.*]

JOHN. [*With a little scream.*]. O, I remember! I remember! My daddy showed it to me. It was at my grandmother's.

SUSAN. O, I remember too, now. It was my mother that had that picture.

JOHN. [*Puzzled.*] But my daddy, when he showed it, said it was a picture of him when he was my age.

SUSAN. And my mother said it was her picture.

[*There is a pause. The WILLOUGHBY children are plainly bewildered.*]

BOY. [*Comes shyly forward.*] I am your daddy.

GIRL. And I'm your mother.

SUSAN. But how can that be? They're in the dining room now, this very minute.

BOY. Only part of them are down there.

GIRL. Only the grown-up part of them.

BOY. We're the other part of them, but they've forgotten.

GIRL. Perhaps they wouldn't know us if they saw us.

SUSAN. [*With pity.*] Then you're only—only little ghost children?

BOY AND GIRL TOGETHER. [*Sadly.*] Only little ghost-children!

SUSAN. O, I'm so sorry!

[*Suddenly JOHN begins to laugh and the other children turn to him inquiringly.*]

JOHN. [*Laughing.*] O, wouldn't father be surprised if he walked into the dining room right in the middle of the company and all, dressed just in that way?

SUSAN. [*Laughing also.*] And wouldn't mother be surprised if she did?

[*The BOY and GIRL join in the merriment, and all laugh hilariously for a few moments.*]

JOHN. [*Suddenly thoughtful.*] What would you say to him if you did that? What would you say to my father?

BOY. I'd say—I'd say—[*Triumphantly.*] I'd ask him if he remembers the forest.

JOHN. The forest?

SUSAN. The forest?

GIRL. [*To BOY—clapping her hands in delight.*] O, our forest! Our forest!

BOY. She used to live there, too. It wasn't a real forest, of course. Just a woods back of our farm. But we pretended.

JOHN. [*In glee.*] O, I know! I know! My father used to do chores on his farm—fetch wood and carry water.

SUSAN. And my mother lived next door to him. She used to dry the dishes in the kitchen. She was so little that she stood on a chair to put them in the pantry.

GIRL. [*Measuring up to SUSAN.*] She wasn't so very little. She wasn't any littler than you are.

BOY. The forest was right back of our house. There was a cottage in it and no one lived there. It was a wonderful place to play in.

GIRL. [*Pointing to BOY.*] He told me that sometime way away when he grew up—sometime he was going to live in that cottage.

BOY. There was a little hill back of it and we pretended it was a mountain.

GIRL. It looked very much indeed like a mountain and he made up stories about it.

SUSAN. We have a forest, too, and *he* [*pointing*] makes up *beautiful* poems.

BOY. Where is your forest? You can't keep a forest in the city!

GIRL. You haven't even an upstairs or a downstairs to your house. It *isn't* a house, really.

JOHN. [*Showing table.*] We made our forest on the table.

SUSAN. But the mountain brook spilled over.

BOY. O, there it is! O, you poor little children!

GIRL. I think we'll have to come and play with them often, shan't we, HANSEL?

BOY. Yes, indeed, GRETEL. I think they need us.

JOHN. HANSEL! GRETEL! [*Jumping up and down*]

in delight.] They have them, too. They have play-names!

SUSAN. Goody! Goody! Ours are MYTYL and TYTYL.

BOY. Do you know any games, you poor little city-children?

JOHN. Do we know any games, MYTYL! Just listen to him.

SUSAN. We know all the games that there are, and more than you do, 'cause they make up new ones for us every day now.

BOY. Do you know "I saw a ship a-sailing"?

JOHN. O, do you mean,

"I saw a ship a-sailing, a-sailing on the sea,

And, oh, it was laden with pretty things for me?"

[*The children now join hands and play "I saw a ship a-sailing." They can then sing together or in groups—the BOY and GIRL together, and then JOHN and SUSAN. The following songs are suggested, for BOY and GIRL: "Jingle, Jingle Bells," "Morning Prayer," "Grandma's Knitting Song," etc.*

For JOHN and SUSAN: "Spring Song," arranged from Mendelssohn, and "Alice's Supper." They are playing a singing game or singing a song, when MOTHER and FATHER WILLOUGHBY open the door. The BOY and GIRL appear very much frightened, and as the MOTHER and FATHER enter the two little ghost-children slip behind them and disappear through the entrance-way. JOHN and SUSAN run to the bed and cover themselves with the bed-clothes.]

MOTHER. JOHN! SUSAN! Whatever were you doing?

JOHN. [*Sitting up in bed.*] O, mother, we were playing with them. Didn't you see them?

MOTHER. See whom? What do you mean? Did you see anyone, DADDY?

DADDY. They're light-headed, because they didn't have any supper.

MOTHER. The poor little things! They've been dreaming, DADDY.

SUSAN. O MOTHER! DADDY! They slipped out right behind you.

MOTHER. Who slipped out, Susan? Tell MOTHER, dearest.

SUSAN. Why, they—they—O MOTHER, there *was* a cabin in the forest!

JOHN. [*To FATHER.*] And you made up stories about it and about the mountain.

SUSAN. And you were just as big as I am when you stood on the chair to put away the dishes.

JOHN. And you had play names, too. They were—let me see!—they were HANSEL and GRETEL.

FATHER. Whatever has happened to them, MOTHER! Whatever has happened to our children!

MOTHER. I don't know, DADDY. But one thing I do know. Every evening—every blessed evening—they're going to have their old mother and DADDY for play-companions.

FATHER. O good, MOTHER! O goody, goody!

SUSAN. Do you mean our own really grown-up mother and daddy?

JOHN. Or do you mean those other children—the children you were when you were little?

[FATHER and MOTHER look at each other.]

MOTHER. Both, darling, both together.

[FATHER nods his head gravely.]

SUSAN. Run back to your comp'ny now, dearest MOTHER.

JOHN. MOTHER, we're so sorry—so very sorry—that we spilled it.

[MOTHER and FATHER are leaving room. At door MOTHER turns.]

MOTHER. And if you take all your meat and potatoes, you can have ice-cream, too. Nurse is bringing the tray this very minute.

JOHN AND SUSAN TOGETHER. [*Clapping hands.*] O goody! O goody! Goody!

CURTAIN.

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INEZ GRAY, a young lady visitor, willing to share in the fun...
MRS. HALSTEAD, a widow, and stepmother of the Halstead girls
HANNAH MARY BARNES, or "Sis," a maiden lady who keeps house for her brother.....
DWIGHT BRADLEY, a fortune hunter and Mrs. Halstead's son by a former marriage.....
DR. BURTON, a young physician.....
SAMMY, the darkey bell-boy in the Halstead house.....
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ATTORNEY; SHERIFF
Time of playing, two hours.
Two interior scenes: Modern costumes.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

Act. 1. Parlor of the Halstead home. The young doctor. The three girls plot to make his acquaintance. An affection of the heart. "Easy to fool a young doctor," but not so easy after all. The step-mother and her son. The stolen diamonds. The missing will. Plot to win Bernice. "I would not marry Dwight Bradley for all the wealth the world contains." Driven from home.

Act 2. Kitchen of the Barnes' farm house. Bub takes off his boots. The new school ma'am. "Supper's ready." "This is our nephew and he's a doctor." Recognition. A difficult problem in arithmetic. The doctor to the rescue. "I'm just the happiest girl in the world." "I've come to pop the question, an' why don't I do it?" Brother and sister. "If it's a heifer, it's teh be mine." The sheriff. Arrested for stealing the diamonds. "Let me knock yer durned head off." The jewels found in Bernice's trunk.

Act 3. Parlor of the Halstead home. "That was a lucky stroke—hiding those diamonds in her trunk." The schemer's plot miscarries. Abe and Sammy join hands. The lawyer. "Bully for her." Bradley tries to escape. "No, ye don't!" Arrested. "It means, dear, that you are to be persecuted no more." Wedding presents, and a war dance around them. "It is no trick at all to fool a young doctor."

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SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I—Entrance to Railroad Station

Looking for a victim—Joe Ruggles—"Them galoots is worse than grizzlies"—"Morning papers"—Madge and Bess plying their trades—"Can't you sing Joe a song?"—Hamilton and his pal confer—Tom Howarth gains important information—"Don't you dare to lay hands on us!"—Hamilton tries to maintain his authority—"Who? Old Joe!"

ACT II—Doomsday's Hotel, Dare-devil's Gulch, California

The landlord secures a guest—Hans disappointed—"Dot is a mistake"—A ghost story—The "Kid and his sister"—"Did I hurt your highness?"—Hans and Doomsday have another talk—Kate Laurel meets the young miner—"Yah, dot vas vot I t'inks"—Madge's disguise penetrated—She recognizes an old enemy—"Now, George Smith, take your choice"—Joe Ruggles as a tramp—"Ef yer think yer can pick on me because I'm han'some ye'll find me ter hum"—Hamilton appears—"Those two youngsters are mine"—The tramp takes a hand.

ACT III—Wood Scene

A lively ghost—Hamilton and Smith plan more villainy—Old Joe thinks of turning Detective—Kate Laurel again—"There is a secret connected with my life"—Kate's confession—"What do you mean, sir?"—Tom Howarth once more—"Vos you looking for a hotel?"—Planning an abduction—Old Joe as an Irishman—"Phat does yez want wid me?"—Undertakes to be a detective—Takes a hand in the abduction—"Do it at your peril."

ACT IV

Hans hears, and tells, the latest news—"I nefer pelieved dot spook peesness"—Kate Laurel astonished—Hamilton attempts flight—"De poys haf got Mr. Hamilton, und dey vill gif him a necktie barty"—Arrest of Smith—"Get out mit my vay, I vas de United States Mail"—Tom meets his old friend under new circumstances—"Do you want me, Tom?"—Old Joe gives consent—A happy ending.

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FRITZ JORDAN.....Horton's chum who plays basket ball
ADAM BIDDICUT.....Professor in Northern University
DEAN SMILEY.....Dean of the College of Arts in Northern University
PERCY ROBBINS.....A recent arrival from "Deah Boston"
ADOLPH HOPKINS.....A lazy boy
BASTIAN BRIGGS.....A dig
JOSH ANDERSON.....A basket ball enthusiast
CHARLIE PADLET.....Reporter for the "Daily Shriek"
PETER.....The popular proprietor of "The Pal"
WALKER.....Manager for the Braino Man
JUNE GRANT } Seniors, chums, and interested respectively in
POLLY PORTER } Horton and Jordan
CLAIRE ANGELINE JONES.....A stage struck girl
SUSY SPRIGGINS.....A freshman with a crush
DAISY ARMSTRONG.....An athletic girl
FLUFF FINLEY.....A fusser girl
FLORA BELLE DELAMARTYR.....Waitress at "The Pal"
MRS. COBB.....Housekeeper at "The Quarters"
LILY.....Maid at "The Quarters"

ACT I. SCENE—The Palace of Sweets, familiarly known as "The Pal," the meeting place of town and college. TIME—Morning, three days before the championship game.

ACT II. SCENE—The campus of Northern University. TIME—Morning, the day of the game.

ACT III. SCENE—"The Quarters," home of the six boys. TIME—Evening, the jubilee after the game.

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